

New York, New Jersey, Connecticut

# Hearing Is Told of Crime Tie To Disposal of Toxic Wastes

By RALPH UMENTHAL

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 10 — A Federal informer once influential in toxic-waste disposal in New Jersey told a Congressional hearing today that members of organized crime had infiltrated the industry, consolidating its control with territorial agreements and violence.

Shielded from cameras by a screen, the informer, Harold Kaufman, a former Teamsters official now under the Federal witness-protection program, testified that New Jersey authorities had not exercised proper control over haulers of toxic waste and that in some cases had apparently abetted illegalities.

He alluded to a continuing investigation of at least one former official of the state's Department of Environmental Protection, but then was interrupted by Edwin H. Steir, head of the New Jersey Criminal Justice Division, who was overseeing his testimony.

The session, held by the House subcommittee on oversight and investigations, also heard an alleged mobster deny that he and others had taken over the Chemical Control Corporation of Elizabeth, N.J., at gunpoint in 1977.

John Albert, identified by law enforcement officials as a "soldier" in the Frank Tieri crime "family," denied the takeover account of a former owner of Chemical Control, but he repeatedly invoked his Fifth Amendment privilege when asked whether he had any connection with the company. The concern is under Federal and state investigation following a suspicious fire last April.

The subcommittee, part of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, has been investigating the disposal of hazardous wastes. Today's hearing focused on organized-crime involvement and the operations of a federally li-

nanaced law enforcement experiment — the Interagency Hazardous Waste Strike Force, combining efforts of the Justice Department and the New Jersey Attorney General's Office.

Congressmen questioned the New Jersey officials on their diligence in following up tips. Mr. Steir, one of the New Jersey justice officials who came here for the hearing, conceded "a failure of communication" in a case where his office remained unaware of a state police surveillance in an active investigation.

## Degnan Agency Defended

But John J. Degnan, the New Jersey Attorney General, said that "to suggest corruption, incompetence or negligence" on the part of state justice officials would be "terribly unfair."

Mr. Kaufman, the informer, was said to have been executive assistant to the president of Local 813 of the Teamsters representing private sanitation workers, and an executive of the Duane Marine Chemical Company, a disposal concern in Perth Amboy, N.J., that was recently indicted for illegal dumping.

"That's what they called us but we never disposed of anything," Mr. Kaufman said. Instead, he said, the company picked up drums of toxic waste from chemical companies and piled them up on its property. "Duane Marine was a complete fraud," he said. Yet, he added, "we were the first licensed under the new state manifest system."

Asked how that could be, he replied that the company president, Edward Lecarreux, "was a very good friend of Dr. Buchanan, that's the only reason I know he got a license — we had no more right to

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→ Paul  
→ Mike  
→ copy Duane Marine File  
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be licensed than the man in the moon."

The reference — which was then cut short by Mr. Steir as "pending in a state grand jury investigation" — was to Ronald Buchanan, a former hazardous-waste official of the state's Department of Environmental Protection. Dr. Buchanan, who has since left the agency, could not

be immediately reached for comment.

Mr. Kaufman testified that in the summer of 1978 he received a call from Mr. Albert, the alleged Tieri "soldier," who he said told him he had just taken over Chemical Control and wanted to form a chemical waste-haulers association to protect territories and prices. The system, Mr. Kaufman testified, was to have been modeled after that by which solid-waste carters tied to organized crime now control garbage carting.

Asked by Representative Albert Gore Jr., Democrat of Tennessee, to comment on the connection between solid waste and toxic waste disposal industries, the informer said that one of the largest toxic waste disposal companies in the country, SCA Services, grew by absorbing existing carting companies, some of them controlled by organized crime. Mr. Gore said he would be investigating this further.